

P. 1100 - Death road

Drive 24

Lowland - Death road

7/2009 085 000001



Curios and Relics  
Household Textiles  
Pillow  
Lincoln Death Bed

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the  
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

# PILLOW FROM LINCOLN DEATHBED, DENVER WOMAN'S GIFT

Relic Will Be Presented to National Society for Preservation

MRS. D. S. FRASER DONOR

Kept in Safety Deposit Vault  
Thirty Years After Death  
of Martyred President

DENVER, Dec. 12.—The pillow upon which the head of Abraham Lincoln rested while life was slowly leaving his body, after he had been shot by J. Wilkes Booth, is soon to become the property of the Lincoln society of Washington, D. C.

This pillow, which for years has been one of the most famous and sought after relics of the last days of the martyred president, has been in the family of Mrs. D. S. Fraser, wife of the manager of the Shirley Hotel, since the day of Lincoln's death.

When Lincoln was shot he was carried across the street into the residence of J. W. Peterson, who, although a warm supporter of the Southern cause, could not refuse a stricken foe shelter. It was in an upstairs room of his house that Lincoln breathed his last.

For weeks and months the furnishings of the house were hacked to pieces by relic seekers, until, finally, the government bought the house, and reimbursed Peterson for his loss, turning the house into a national museum.

The bed clothes upon which Lincoln lay have been preserved, the pillow belonging to Mrs. Fraser being the one upon which his head rested when he died.

In one corner of the pillow appears a great dark brown stain, caused by the blood of the martyr president.

For thirty years the pillow reposed in a safety deposit vault and was only taken out last month to be sent to Washington, where, with the shroud that covered it at the time of Lincoln's death, it will be presented to the Lincoln society.

## Pillow on Which Lincoln Died in Tailor's Home Is Given to the Head of a Washington School

Special to The New York Times.

1926

WASHINGTON, Feb. 10.—The blood-stained pillow on which the head of Abraham Lincoln rested the night he died in the little house of Peterson, the tailor, opposite Ford's Theatre, April 15, 1865, has come into the possession of Mrs. Jessie F. Webster of the Marjorie Webster School at 1,409 Massachusetts Avenue, N. W. It was given her by Mrs. Pauline Peterson Wenzing, 74 years old, on whose bed Lincoln was placed when carried from the theatre into the house of her father, William Peterson, at 516 Tenth Street, N. W.

Mr. Peterson retained possession of the bed, pillow sheets and counterpane until his death, when he willed the pillow to his youngest daughter, Louise, who became the first wife of Charles Rector, the restaurateur. Upon Mrs. Rector's death it reverted to her sister, Mrs. Wenzig of Baltimore.

The pillow is well preserved but is yellow because of its age, although it was made of blue and white ticking. It is made of soft feathers, hand sewn and measures 22 inches.

Mrs. Wenzig signed an affidavit which she included with her gift, as follows:

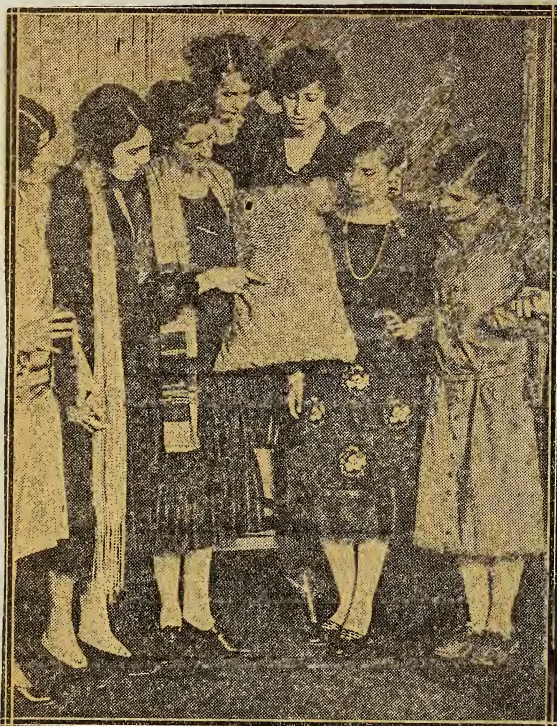
"This is to certify that the pillow now in the possession of Jessie F. Webster of the City of Washington, D. C., is the same pillow on which President Abraham Lincoln died, April 15, 1865. His death occurred in my room in my old home, Number 516 Tenth Street, Northwest, Washington, D. C."

Mrs. Webster said that the bed on which Lincoln died was willed by William Peterson to a son, who after the Civil War was a furniture dealer in Washington. He later gave it to Colonel O. H. Oldroyd for his collection of Lincoln relics in the house on Tenth Street.

"Mrs. Wenzig has other Lincoln heirlooms connected with the bed," Mrs. Webster said, "including the counterpane which was spread over Mr. Lincoln the night he occupied the room. Although she is 74 years old, Mrs. Wenzig's recollection of occurrences on that terrible night are very clear. William Peterson was a tailor who made uniforms for army officers, and for that reason Mr. Lincoln also went there to be fitted for clothes."

"Mrs. Wenzig was a girl of about 13 the night Mr. Lincoln was shot, and her bedroom on the first floor of the Tenth Street house was the one into which Lincoln was taken after the tragedy."





*Washington Post - Feb. 12 - 1926*  
Harris & Ewing.  
Lincoln's death pillow which was given to the Majorie Webster school by Mrs. Pauline Peterson Wenzing. Miss Webster is shown displaying the pillow to some of her students, pointing out the bloodstains which are on the covering.

### LINCOLNIANA

Tyson's Book Shop, 319 Caesar Misch Building, Providence, R. I., issues from time to time attractive lists of Lincoln material that they have for sale.

The town of New Salem, Ill., which practically died in 1840, when the railroad which was put through, missed it by two miles, is according to *Review of Reviews* being restored. It owes its new lease of life to the fact that Abraham Lincoln once lived there, engaged in business, and took an active part in the life of the community.

The pillow on which President Lincoln died, nine hours after being taken to the home of Mrs. William Petersen, across the street from Ford's Theatre, has recently been valued at \$10,000, a third of the price paid for the entire home by the Government in 1896. The pillow has been traced to a Petersen descendant, who, so states the *New York Sun*, lives in Vancouver. The Petersen home of red brick with green shutters was built in 1840 for Mr. Petersen, then the capital's fashionable tailor.

According to the records of "American Book-Prices Current," there was very limited activity in Lincoln material during the season of 1931-32. A Broadside Proclamation of Freedom of Slaves, by the President of the United States (Worcester, Mass., Fiske, 1863) and split at folds, brought \$11.50, while an original playbill of the performance of "Our American Cousin," at Ford's Theatre, April 14th, 1865, went for \$20. It was described as a first issue, prepared and printed when Lincoln accepted the invitation to attend the performance— $18\frac{3}{4} \times 5\frac{7}{8}$  in. Edward Pierrepont's Argument to the Jury, on the trial of John H. Surratt for the murder of President Lincoln, Washington, 1867, and issued in 8vo paper covers, brought \$7.50, while Henry C. Whitney's "Life on the Circuit with Lincoln," published in Boston (1892) changed owners for \$37.00. As for Lincoln autographs, nearly 50 are listed as having been sold in American auction rooms during the season of 1931-32. *The collector's journal*

Suite 1100  
706 South Hill Street  
Los Angeles, California  
August 23rd, 1938

The Curator  
Lincoln Museum  
Fort Wayne, Ind.

Dear Sir:

As you undoubtedly know, Mr Lincoln was carried across the street from the Ford Theatre, after being shot, to the home of one Mr. Petersen. In this house, he passed away.

At present, a relic of this incident - the pillow upon which Mr. Lincoln died, is in the possession of Mr. Petersen's grand-daughter, Mrs. D. S. Fraser, of Vancouver, Canada.

Circumstances are such, that Mrs. Fraser feels she should dispose of this valuable relic, and has instigated me as the person to find a buyer for same.

The pillow is a present located in the Chicago Historical Society's Museum, loaned for exhibition through Mrs. Fraser's courtesy. It can, however, be removed at any time.

Should you be interested in obtaining this object of Lincolnana, kindly write me, care of this address:

Suite 1100, Cutts Building  
706 South Hill Street  
Los Angeles, California

for which,

I thank you,

*David Curtis*

David Curtis

DC:an



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Suite 1100  
706 South Hill St.  
Los Angeles, Calif.

Advertising Manager  
Lincoln Life Ins. Co  
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Dear Sir:

Will the Lincoln National Life Insurance Co. have an exhibit in either of the World's Fairs in San Francisco or New York? If so, would you not be interested in obtaining for this exhibit, an authenticated relic of Lincolnana, the pillow, upon which Mr Lincoln passed away.

This pillow has proved to be a popular attraction in the Museum of the Chicago Historical Society, where it is, at present, located through the curtesy of its owner, Mrs D. S. Fraser.

Mrs Fraser is anxious to dispose of this relic, and is open to, any offer on the part of your concern in buying it outright, or leasing it for the duration of either Exposition. //

As I have been instigated by Mrs Fraser to sell or loan the pillow, would you kindly give this matter your consideration and write me:

Suite 1100 - Cutts Building  
706 South Hill Street  
Los Angeles, California

for which,

I thank you,

*David Curtis*  
David Curtis

DC:an

**LINCOLN NATIONAL**  
PUBLICITY DEPARTMENT

Referred to *Dr. Warren*

REC'D AUG 26 1938

Answered \_\_\_\_\_

**LIFE INSURANCE CO.**

*Answer - pillow*

September 6, 1938

Mr. David Curtis  
Suite 1100 - Cutts Bldg.  
706 South Hill St.  
Los Angeles, Calif.

Dear Sir:

I regret to advise that our company is not planning an exhibit at the World's Fair at San Francisco or the one at New York.

We would not be interested in the acquisition of the pillow you mention and we trust it may remain in the Chicago Historical Society.

Very truly yours,

LAW:FW  
L.A. Warren

Director

*San Diego Union*

*2-19-55*

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## **LINCOLN DEATH PILLOW GIVEN**

WASHINGTON, Feb. 18  
(AP) — The pillow on which Abraham Lincoln's head rested during his last hours was given to the nation.

It was presented to the Interior Department by Miss Marjorie F. Webster, founder and president of Marjorie Webster Junior College, for display at the house where President Lincoln died April 15, 1865.

Miss Webster accompanied the gift with a series of affidavits, including a notarized statement of authenticity by the pillow's first owner, Pauline Petersen Wenzing. Mrs. Wenzing was the daughter of William Petersen, who owned the home where Lincoln was taken after being shot at the Ford Theater across the street.

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